

# CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS *in California*

United States Department of Agriculture    Natural Resources Conservation Service    Davis, California



Women's History Month:  
USDA Photographer  
Captures Dust Bowl  
Farm Workers

**See Page 4**



## Conservation Success Stories

Sharing Examples of Partnership Successes

**See Page 6**

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# Conservation Success Stories



## In this issue

of *Current Developments*, we feature a new series of 12 success story fact sheets. The fact sheets provide samples of the great conservation work occurring throughout the state and examples of how cooperative effort gets the job done. These fact sheets are reproduced full-sized on pages 6 through 27.

The fact sheets cover the entire state, region by region. To minimize redundancy, the space used for contact information on the fact sheets has been replaced by Caligrams for this issue.

You can also view or download these colorful and informative success story fact sheets at our web site. Point your web browser to the Public Affairs home page at [www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/pa/pa.html](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/pa/pa.html) and click on "Success Stories".

A limited number of copies are available from Public Affairs in the State Office.



Questions, comments, and contributions may be forwarded to:

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# *A Message from Jeff*

**T**his issue of Current Developments features a sampling of the many success stories California NRCS employees have participated in as leaders, advisors, coaches, and implementers. What a great collection—I am sure you take pride in the great work that you all do to help farmers and ranchers do a better job in the stewardship of the natural resources they have responsibility for on their private lands.

Today, more than ever, the importance of technical and financial assistance to California's private landowners is critically important. As you all know, regulatory pressures on agriculture related to water quality and quantity, land management practices, wildlife habitat, and wetlands are increasing. The best answer California landowners have to these pressures is to continue to manage their operations using the best conservation practices available. NRCS technical assistance provided through Resource Conservationist Districts continues to be the best resource California's farmers and ranchers have to turn to for information.

I am committed to providing the best-trained and informed employees possible to provide this assistance. We are continuing a major effort statewide to update our Field Office Technical Guides. We continue to work with agencies and partners to finalize an Endangered Species Memorandum of Understanding that, when implemented, will enhance landusers ability to apply sound conservation practices. We are responding to priority staffing needs (i.e., filling positions) as identified by our RCD partners and the cluster management teams. We are beginning to build multi-disciplinary expertise to support



NRCS and RCD field staff as well as California landusers in emerging technical areas such as riparian and wetlands enhancement and restoration and air quality concerns. We continue to utilize and support the student coop and trainee programs to recruit the best future employees possible. We continue to maximize our support for both formal and informal training opportunities. And we continue to look for and take advantage of partnering opportunities to do the best technical job possible.

Far and away, however, our best technical resource is you—that experienced, trained, professional committed to service for Californians and to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. Just as the NRCS has continued to evolve to serve a broad clientele on a wide array of natural resource issues—we remain as committed as ever to maintaining our technical expertise. This issue of Current Developments is testimony to the fact that in spite of all these challenges—we are still successful!

Congratulations to all of you for jobs well done!



# USDA PHOTOGRAPHER RESCUES DESTITUTE FARM WORKERS

*By Gwen Gilbert, Federal Women's Program Manager*

In celebration of Women's History Month, I would like to share the story behind the making of the famous "Migrant Mother" photograph, taken by government photographer Dorothea Lange, during the Great Depression. Lange was a documentary photographer working for the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration (FSA), previously known as the Resettlement Administration, during the 1930's.

Dorothea Lange recounts the story of the "picture that symbolized an era," in an article entitled "The Assignment I'll Never Forget," published in *Popular Photography* magazine, February, 1960. She had been working in the field for a month, photographing migrant farm laborers in California. With her assignment done, she headed north, driving past Nipomo in San Luis Obispo County, seven hours from home, on that cold and rainy day in March, 1936:

*I was on my way and barely saw a crude sign with pointing arrow which flashed by at the side of the road, saying PEA-PICKERS CAMP. But out of the corner of my eye I did see it.*

*I didn't want to stop, and didn't. I didn't want to remember that I had seen it, so drove on and ignored the summons. Then accompanied by the rhythmic hum of the windshield wipers, arose an inner argument: 'Dorothea, how about that camp back there? What is the situation back there? Are you going back? Nobody could ask this of you, now could they? To turn back is certainly not necessary. Haven't you plenty of negatives already on this subject? Besides, if you take*

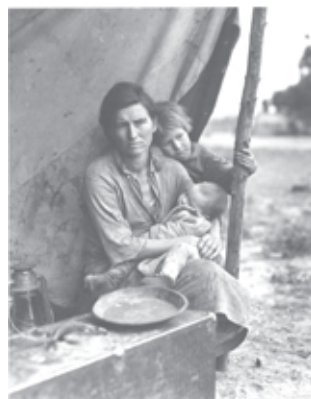
*a camera out in this rain, you're just asking for trouble. Now be reasonable, etc., etc., etc.*

*Having convinced myself for 20 miles that I could continue on, I did the opposite. Almost without realizing what I was doing, I made a U-turn on the empty highway. I went back those 20 miles and turned off the highway at that sign, PEA-PICKERS CAMP. I was following instinct, not reason; I drove into that wet and soggy camp and parked my car like a homing pigeon.*

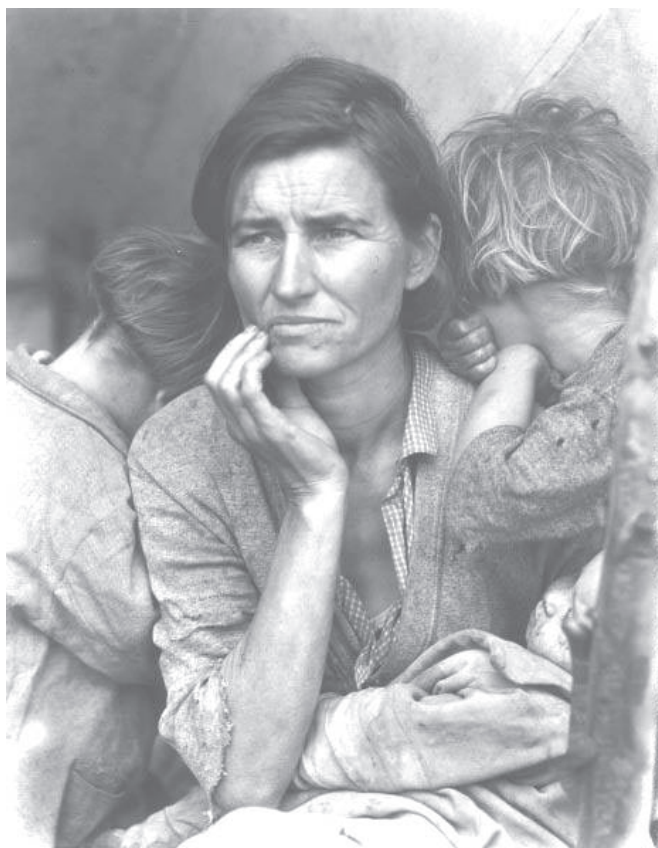
*I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother, as if drawn by a magnet. I do not know how I explained my presence or my camera to her, but I do remember she asked me no questions. I made five exposures, working closer and closer from the same direction. I did not ask her name or her history. She told me her age, that she was 32. She told me that they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields and birds that the children had killed. She had just sold the tires from her car to buy food. There she sat in the lean-to tent with her children huddled around her, and seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me. There was a sort of equality about it.*

*What I am trying to tell other photographers is that had I not been deeply involved in my undertaking on that field trip, I would not have had to turn back. What I am trying to say is that I believe this inner compulsion to be the vital ingredient in our work; that if our work is to carry force and meaning to our views, we must be willing to go 'all-out'.*

**Series of photographs, Nipomo, California, 1936, by Dorothea Lange**



As soon as Lange got home, she developed the negatives, and dashed with pictures barely dry to the office of the *San Francisco News*. The *News* editor, George West, promptly notified Federal relief officials that the pea-pickers, stranded by crop failure in Nipomo, were starving. On March 10, 1936, the *News* carried a United Press report that the Federal Government was rushing 20,000 pounds of food to the 1,800 hungry migrant farm workers. Beneath the headline “Rugged, Hungry, Broke, Harvest Workers Live in Squallor [*sic*],” were two of Lange’s photographs of the mother and her children in the lean-to shelter.



**Migrant Mother, by Dorothea Lange**

The following day, the *News* printed an editorial, along with the “Migrant Mother” photograph, under the headline asking “What Does the ‘New Deal’ Mean to This Mother and Her Children?” A shipment of food (beans, flour, and rolled oats) had arrived for the harvest workers, who had been denied aid from county welfare agencies who “wanted them to move along” after the loss of the pea crop. The *News* reported, “Only the accident of a Federal survey photographer’s report drew attention of Federal relief officials, and resulted in food being trucked to the camp from

Los Angeles yesterday.” Dorothea Lange’s name was not mentioned in the stories or the photo credit lines. The influential editorial and the photographs published in the *News*, also resulted in the allocation of \$200,000 by the State Emergency Relief Administration, needed to begin building sanitary migrant camps in California.

The mother in the now famous photograph was Florence Thompson, who had left Oklahoma for California in 1925. The Depression hit hard about the time her husband died. She supported her children, and survived the Depression, by picking potatoes, peas, grapes, and cotton. With her daughters in the picture, Norma (Rydlewski), in her arms; Katherine (McIntosh), left; and Ruby (Sprague), right; Thompson eventually settled to reside in Modesto.

Dorothea Lange achieved something astonishing, something that was not only about starving pea-pickers, but beyond that, something about motherhood itself. Here was an image of every mother’s anguish, in all times and places, whether coming from drought, flood, famine, or war. Lange later said, “what surprises me is that when they present this story of agricultural labor, people don’t really see the big story which is behind it, which is the story of our natural resources.”

The “Migrant Mother,” like few other pictures, leads a life of its own. It is the most famous photograph of the Depression Era, and perhaps the single most universally recognized and appreciated photograph of all time. Dorothea Lange created a work of art, with its own message rather than that of its maker, which continues to speak to the people of the world!

For more information on the life and work of Dorothea Lange, the following references are highly recommended:

Andrea Fisher, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Women: Women Photographers for the US Government, 1935 to 1944* (New York: Pandora Press, 1987).

Milton Meltzer, *Dorothea Lange: A Photographer’s Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1978).

Elizabeth Partridge, *Dorothea Lange: A Visual Life* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994).

To view the 270,000 images recorded by Lange and the famous team of FSA photographers, you can access the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog at: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html>



Cover Feature  
**Conservation Success Stories**

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service  
California's Resource Conservation Districts

Benefitting People and Land in the State of  
**CALIFORNIA**



Tuolumne River in 1937



## Lower Tuolumne River Restoration

*Dozens of partners have joined forces in a comprehensive effort to restore water quality and habitat for endangered Chinook salmon and other fish and wildlife along the Tuolumne River. The project will restore the river's natural floodplain that existed in 1937, before levies were constructed.*

From majestic Yosemite National Park, the Tuolumne River flows toward the San Joaquin River, providing recreational opportunities, power, and water for part of the most productive agricultural valley in the Nation. Within this valley lie marginally productive and frequently flooded parcels, including a floodplain cleared for farming six decades ago.

Following a major flood in 1997, NRCS in cooperation with East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District, offered permanent floodplain easements to landowners along the river. NRCS is working on other conservation improvements, such as restored riparian plantings along stream corridors, vegetative buffer strips, and on-farm conservation improvements to restore water quality. These partnership efforts on about 4,000 acres help protect and restore a significant part of the ecosystem and provide a model framework for other restoration efforts along the Tuolumne.

No longer considered marshy wastelands, wetlands are now valued as the great habitat centers, water filtering features and flood control reservoirs that they are. Throughout California, farmers and ranchers using USDA's Wetlands Reserve Program, have shown great willingness to transform marginal agricultural lands into ecosystems of great biologic and hydrologic value: In Contra Costa County 493 acres of marginal Delta cropland are now valuable waterfowl habitat; On Medford Island, 800 acres prone to constant flooding is now home to snow geese, swans, ducks and other migratory birds; Tomales Bay nature photographer Tupper Blake used WRP to restore 160 acres of marsh-turned-agricultural land in Modoc County back to functioning wetlands, which are adjacent to the Lower Klamath

National Wetlands Reserve. These three projects join 116 others across California, to collectively place 54,000 acres of WRP-restored wetlands on the California landscape. Nearly 100 willing farmers and ranchers remain on the WRP waiting list, pending the time and resources to add their land to this positive new swing in the wetlands pendulum.



## Wetland Restoration

### Yuba and Bear Rivers

Sponsored by the Nevada County RCD, the 50-member Yuba Watershed Council garnered \$1.2 million in grants for conservation through the Prop. 204 Clean Water Act. In a 2 million-acre project area, the grants fund watershed planning, water quality monitoring, education and outreach, riparian protection, forest thinning, and restoration of Nevada City's Deer Creek. NRCS is leading the Council and providing technical expertise for these projects.

### Pete's Creek Partnership

Ranchers along Pete's Creek partnered with NRCS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Honey Lake Valley RCD to restore the health of the Great Basin rangelands. After fencing cattle away from streams, ranchers stabilized the streambanks with native riparian plants and riprap. The partnership pioneered the use of NUTBAL, a computer program that guides better grazing use of pasture. Other local ranchers have now asked to join.

### Navarro & Garcia Watersheds

Threatened by state-imposed water pollution restrictions on the Garcia River, the Mendocino County RCD and NRCS formed an advisory group to survey the 72,000-acre watershed. Their proposed measures for stream and upland wildlife habitat restoration were so effective they garnered funding from the Coastal Conservancy and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Now citizens in the adjacent Navarro Watershed have their own plan, encouraging threatened salmon to return.



### Owens Creek Restoration

To remedy flooding from periodic levee breaches along Owens Creek, three miles of stream channel on San Felipe Ranch were restored to their original riparian meander. NRCS worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, and the Wildlife Conservation Board on this \$820,000 project. In addition to lowering levees, 344 acres adjacent to the Merced National Wildlife Refuge were converted to seasonal wetlands, helping to filter the irrigation tailwater.

### Upper Stony Creek Watershed

Local landowners, with technical assistance and \$600,000 from NRCS, are collectively restoring the Upper Stony Creek Watershed. The constellation of conservation measures, implemented over 20 years, includes 53,719 acres of managed and deferred grazing, more than 55 miles of fencing, and 59 watering troughs with 12 miles of pipeline filling 34 storage tanks. These measures and keeping cattle from the creek has improved water quality and minimized erosion.

### Soil Surveys Assist Military Planners

A recent collaborative effort between NRCS and the Department of Defense is protecting both fragile desert species and the interests of our national defense. Armed with soil surveys developed by NRCS soil scientists on 1.2 million acres in San Bernardino County, military environmental planners can better assess their training areas: areas susceptible to erosion; areas likely to produce harmful dust; sensitive areas in need of protection—and how to restore areas already impaired.

### Grove Basin Flood Control Project

Funded largely through NRCS's EWP Program, the \$7.5 million Grove Basin project protects dairies in the Chino Basin—largest concentration of dairy cows in the world—from flood damage. The system, including 10,080 feet of installed drain pipe and 50 storm inlets, intercepts runoff and protects the Santa Anna River, a major drinking water source for Orange County.

### Conservation Planning

NRCS is preparing conservation plans for leased agricultural land in the San Pasqual Valley, helping leaseholders comply with government requirements. The City of San Diego now requires each leaseholder on its 11,000 acres in San Pasqual Valley to submit a conservation plan as part of their lease renewals. NRCS has prepared seven plans covering 2,730 acres.

### Permit Coordination for Resource Conservation on Farms

Complex permitting processes often discourage farmers on the Central Coast and elsewhere from tackling positive conservation work. Spurred on by a challenge from Congressman Sam Farr, NRCS partnered with Sustainable Conservation and the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County to develop an innovative "one stop regulatory shopping" process. Land managers can now use ten NRCS conservation practices to prevent erosion, protect water quality, or enhance natural habitats without needing individual permits—especially important among Spanish-speaking farmers. The popular process is now moving from Elkhorn Slough into the Salinas Valley and Morro Bay watersheds.



## Benefitting People and Land in the North Coast Region



### North Coast Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Arcata Service Center
- Eureka Service Center
- Dorris RC&D Office
- Petaluma Service Center
- Ukiah Service Center
- Weaverville Service Center
- Yreka Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Butte County RCD
- Del Norte RCD (Pending)
- Gold Ridge RCD
- Humboldt County RCD
- Mendocino County RCD
- Shasta Valley RCD
- Siskiyou RCD
- Sotoyome RCD
- Trinity RCD
- West Lake RCD

### Navarro and Garcia Watersheds

Working to restore endangered salmon can make conservationists feel a bit like the fish—swimming upstream against conflicting goals, regulatory and fiscal constraints, and, at times, even Mother Nature. But there is an alternative.

On California's north coast, TMDLs—or Total Maximum Daily Loads—of water pollutants are being assessed for 18 watersheds, adding the force of law to communities' desires to restore streams. But when TMDL scrutiny first came to the area, focusing on the 72,000-acre Garcia watershed, the community was already at work on a restoration plan. The Mendocino County Resource Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service had formed an advisory group, surveyed the watershed, and gained agreement on measures needed to restore the streams and uplands. With the plan in hand, the RCD leveraged funds for projects from NRCS with funds from the Coastal Conservancy, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and other sources.

Landowners in the Navarro Watershed, inspired by their Garcia neighbors, now have their own plan in place and restoration activities are being focused there, before the expected TMDL limits are imposed. You might say the community is staging its own clean water act.

#### Garcia River Watershed Project The Measure of Success

Fish habitat improvement structures:	105
Fish barrier modifications:	17
Riparian exclusion fencing:	14,500 ft.
Pasture cross fencing:	1,100 ft.
Troughs installed:	3
Pipeline installed:	3,000 ft.
Dairy waste storage lagoons:	4
Dairy waste transfer lines:	2,000 ft.
Dairy barn runoff systems:	2
Log landing removal:	850
Road removal:	400 ft.
Road stream crossings removed:	10
Road outslowing and drainage:	3,000 ft.
Culverts installed:	30
Rocked fords installed:	3
Gully control structures:	28
Landslide stabilization project:	1
Riparian tree planting:	10 acres
Bioengineering streambank treatments:	6,895 ft.
Road erosion control workshops:	2

#### Ongoing Projects

Watershed Education Project  
Tribal Native Plant Gathering Project  
Water Quality/ Habitat Monitoring Project





### Eel River Watershed Project

The Humboldt County Service Center and local RCDs address dairy waste water quality and erosion-sedimentation problems in the 2,360,000 acre Eel River Geographic Priority Area. The watershed is the fifth worst in the nation in terms of sediment load. NRCS developed an overall conservation plan for the watershed and is helping landowners to develop individual plans that will improve water quality, minimize erosion, and protect habitat for coho and chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

### Trinity River

In a \$58 million watershed project, NRCS and Trinity County Resource Conservation District have joined over 20 agencies, groups, and tribes to restore damaged watersheds that are home to threatened salmon and steelhead trout. NRCS and the RCD have decommissioned hundreds of miles of forest roads and are planting more than 100,000 trees in the subwatershed of Grass Valley Creek. For work along Trinity River's South Fork, they have leveraged more than \$1 million cash and \$150,000 in erosion-control services.



### Soil Survey of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties

In Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, NRCS is mapping the last large unsurveyed soil tract in the United States. The 2,179,660 acres include private rural and urban land, the Redwood National and State Parks, tribal lands, the Kings Range, and the Headwaters Forest. Eight scientists use aerial photography, representative sampling plans, and computerized Geographic Information Systems to survey 280,000 acres per year. The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District initiated the survey to give resource planners a tool to reduce erosion, maintain long-term land productivity, improve water quality, and restore wildlife habitat.

### Clear Lake Basin

The Lakeport Local Partnership expanded the Clear Lake Basin Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) during the last three years into a countywide coordinating committee for five smaller CRMPs. These groups, working with NRCS and RCDs, leveraged more than \$940,000 in federal, state, and county grants. Through weekend work parties, 450 active local landowners tackle problems such as noxious weeds, salmon and steelhead trout habitat loss, and water quality degradation. The landowners also recently provided hand labor for projects stabilizing more than one mile of streambanks along Scotts, Kelsey, and Middle Creeks.

### Navarro and Garcia Watersheds

## Caligram

## Lewis Honored at Farm Bureau Dinner

*By Dave Sanden, Public Affairs Specialist, Davis SO*

**Alvin G. Lewis**, long-time Scott Valley farmer, rancher, consultant, dairyman and soil conservation expert was honored with a Distinguished Service Award at the annual Siskiyou County Farm Bureau dinner on February 19.

Lewis retired from the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1989 after 32 years of service. While an SCS employee, Lewis developed conservation plans for many local farmers and ranchers and was

known statewide for his engineering skills. He surveyed and engineered ditches, dams, irrigation systems and rock riprap installations throughout the Siskiyou County area. Lewis is also a recognized expert on soil conservation and riparian vegetation.

Although Lewis was only a member of the Farm Bureau for a few years in the mid-1950's, local President **Ray Platt** said the executive board chose Lewis "because of his dedication to the community."

## Benefitting People and Land in the Sacramento Valley Region



### Sacramento Valley Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Chico Soil Survey Office
- Colusa Service Center
- Lakeport Partnership Office
- Red Bluff Area Office
- Red Bluff Service Center
- Redding Service Center
- Willows Service Center
- Yolo Service Center
- Yuba City Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Colusa County RCD
- Butte County RCD (pending)
- East Lake RCD
- Glenn County RCD
- Sutter County RCD
- Tehama County RCD
- Vina RCD
- Western Shasta RCD
- Yolo County RCD
- Yuba County RCD

### Upper Stony Creek Watershed

In the last 20 years, with the dedication of the Glenn County RCD and local ranchers; \$601,000 from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); and technical assistance from NRCS and others; amazing changes have occurred in the Upper Stony Creek Watershed (see listed statistical accomplishments). But the successes have also been in the hearts and minds of those who voluntarily choose to sustain the land, given the proper help and incentives. Chet Vogt, whose land is pictured above, is one such person. Vogt bought an overgrazed ranch in 1992 and has completely changed the ecosystem. He and NRCS developed a plan that calls for rotational grazing, fencing, perennial grasses, and off-stream water sources for cattle. It is paying off in more ways than one.

Vogt is but one of 30 landowners collectively renovating the watershed. In the upper watershed, 16 other landowners concentrate on timber management, without which catastrophic wildfires decimate the vegetative cover and invite erosion and very dirty streams.

### Upper Stony Creek Project: Ten Years of Success

- 19,769 acres of deferred grazing
- 33,950 acres of managed grazing
- 40 educational workshops
- 32 conservation plans
- 1,860 acres prescribed burning
- 35+ miles of electric fencing
- 20+ miles of barbed wire fencing
- 9 miles of firebreaks
- 12 miles of livestock pipeline
- 34 water storage tanks
- 59 watering troughs for wildlife and livestock
- 1,047 acres planted to annuals and clovers
- 894 acres planted to perennials
- 14 miles of reconstructed roads
- 12 springs improved
- 8 ponds created
- 9 riparian pastures created





#### Reeds Creek Watershed Project

The Tehama County RCD obtained a \$72,000 water quality grant for the Reeds Creek and Red Bank Creek watersheds for projects to reduce erosion and sedimentation, youth education, workshops. Projects include a plant propagation facility for a local school and streambank stabilization with a bioengineering emphasis. NRCS is providing technical and design assistance. The grant has enabled the RCD to hold 8 landowner meetings and to become proactive in its leadership in Tehama County.

#### Clear Lake

Clear lake is an impaired water body that has been severely impacted by human activities over time. A 1994 NRCS study determined that algae blooms have cost residents more than \$7 million. The study facilitated the formation of five Coordinated Resource Management Plans to address water quality issues and a locally led effort to address long term land issues. In 1999, more than \$50,000 was leveraged through the CRMP process to address issues such as algae blooms, road building, ag nutrients, and streambank erosion.



#### Upper Little Stony Watershed

Under a Coordinated Resource Management Plan, excessive fuel load was reduced on more than 60 acres using controlled burns. Colusa County RCD partnered with NRCS and other agencies to sponsor the \$20,000 project.

#### Feather River

The Feather River Water Quality and Air Quality program resulted in 22 NRCS contracts to install improved irrigation systems, apply irrigation management practices, use integrated pest management and other sustainable agricultural practices. More than 70 applications were filed in the Yuba/Sutter area in 1999, and more than 70 percent of 1999 participants were minority farmers.

#### Willows Slough

The Willows Slough Watershed Integrated Resources Management Plan addresses 131,000 acres of farm and ranchland issues, driving the successful implementation of an equally integrated set of farm-friendly projects—conservation, restoration, and costshare—and wildlife enhancement projects. Projects range from construction of tailwater ponds and riparian enhancement to roadside restoration, canal bank vegetation, controlled burns, and the establishment of hedgerow buffers. To date, the district has sponsored over \$2 million in direct project dollars plus hundreds of thousands of in-kind service hours.

#### Upper Stony Creek Watershed

## Caligram

## Vice President's Conservation Package

*From the Special Legislative Summary for January 10, 2000*

On Thursday, January 7, 2000, Vice President **Al Gore** announced a \$1.3 billion package for the Administration's FY2001 Budget Proposal for conservation programs that help family farmers protect natural resources and farmland. The central component of the proposal is a \$600 million program for a Conservation Security Program. Other parts of the plan include increasing the

Environmental Quality Incentives Program by \$125 million per year; increasing enrollment in the Wetlands Reserve Program to enroll 250,000 acres per year; increasing acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve to 40 million acres; funding the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program at \$50 million per year; and providing \$65 million per/year for the Farmland Protection Program.

## Benefitting People and Land in the Modoc Plateau Region



### Pete's Creek Partnership

The sprawling Great Basin desert rangelands where Darrell Wood's grandfather and great grandfather ran cattle seems to hold a paradox: The harder you use the land, the less profit the land yields. Indeed hard use makes the land show signs of wear as clear, perennial streams turn muddy and seasonal, and brush and low-quality annual grasses squeeze out the preferred perennials.

Frustrated, Wood and his two ranching partners, working with NRCS, Honey Lake RCDs, and other partners, launched the Pete's Creek Partnership project, to try a new approach.

Pete's Creek Partnership began by fencing cattle away from streams and stabilizing those streams with grading structures and native riparian plants. The Partnership was also one of three Lassen County ranches to pioneer an NRCS/U.C. Cooperative Extension nutritional balancing program (NUTBAL) which correlates forage quality in a pasture with peak cattle health. When forage quality drops, the cattle are moved — improving their nutrition and giving perennial grasses time to recover.

Results? Weaning weights are higher, calf crops are higher and pasture grass is more abundant, diverse, and of higher quality (see statistics). Neighbors have been quick to notice. Five ranchers in the Willow Creek Watershed have asked to join the effort. They are working hard to replace paradox with productivity and partnership.

### Modoc Plateau Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Alturas Service Center
- Greenville Partnership Office
- Susanville Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Central Modoc RCD
- Fall River RCD
- Feather River RCD
- Goose Lake RCD
- Honey Lake Valley RCD
- Lava Beds RCD
- Pit RCD
- Sierra Valley RCD
- Surprise Valley RCD

### Pete's Creek Partnership Project

#### The Land:

Pete's Creek subwatershed: 21,760 acres  
Willow Creek Watershed: 53,436 acres

#### The Partners:

Darrell Wood, Co-owner  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

#### The Programs:

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP); NRCS  
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP); NRCS  
Partners for Wildlife (PW); USF&WS

#### The Conservation Projects:

- 20 acres of willow and cottonwood plantings (WHIP)
- 4 miles of fencing (PW)
- 5 grade stabilization structures (WRP)
- 2 structures for water control (WRP)
- 13,000 acres of planned grazing
- 112 acres of brush control (WHIP)
- 350 feet of dike (WRP)
- One spillway repair (WRP)
- 150 acres of wetlands restoration (WRP)
- 10 acres seeded to native grass (WHIP)





### Shasta and Scott Rivers

As part of the \$20 million Klamath River Task Force, NRCS and the RCDs helped landowners establish the 995,000-acre Shasta River and Scott Rivers watershed groups. The groups address water quality problems, streambank degradation, and the destruction of threatened salmon and steelhead trout habitat. NRCS advises landowners on creating farm or ranch conservation plans help improve river water temperature and turbidity. The RCDs installed 12 fish screens, 6 livestock watering facilities, 21 miles of riparian fencing, 127 acres of buffer zones, and 21 miles of streambank stabilization.

### Fall River Watershed Program

The Fall River RCD obtained one \$116,000 grant and applied for an additional \$670,000 grant to identify solutions to severe problems in the Fall River watershed. Excessive erosion threatens the renowned Fall River world-class trout fishery. Projects implemented in 1999 include the Bear Meadow restoration project, riparian livestock fencing on Fall River, and conservation planning on meadows which provides important sediment trapping and wildlife habitat. NRCS' statewide stream initiative team consults on the watershed's meadow plans.



### Pit River Watershed Alliance

NRCS, with the Central Modoc, Goose Lake, and Pit RCDs and help from the Forest Service, formed the 40-member Pit River Watershed Alliance. The Pit River drains 3,411,034 acres—75 percent public, 25 percent private—with 4,696 miles of waterways. Volcanic high-ash soils in the area erode easily, making streambanks difficult to stabilize. Vegetative and grazing strategies work best on the Pit. The Alliance coordinates new measures and tries to prevent conflicts between members' 24 ongoing mitigation projects, currently funded at \$5,510,000.

### Indian Creek PL-566 Project and Smithneck Creek GPA

The feather River, which provides 24 percent of California Aqueduct water going to farms and cities, receives a muddy torrent from Indian Creek's 217,500-acre watershed. To reduce sediment and improve trout and game habitat, the Feather River RCD leveraged \$847,000 in Federal assistance into \$1,297,000. NRCS helped area ranchers manage 3,117 acres of pasture, fence and seed 56,715 feet of streambanks, and install nine offsite watering facilities. In the Smithneck Creek area, NRCS and the Sierra Valley RCD improve poor soil by sharing landowners' costs of installing windbreaks, managing grazing, and fencing pasture.

**Pete's Creek Partnership**

## Caligram

## January Crop Production Forecast

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) crop production forecast for January showed increases for some commodities when compared to estimates from last season's crops. The summary includes forecasts for the following commodities:

**Cotton:** 620,000 bales (up 76 percent from 1998).

**Navel Oranges:** 80 million cartons (unchanged from October and up 90 percent from last season's freeze-damaged crop).

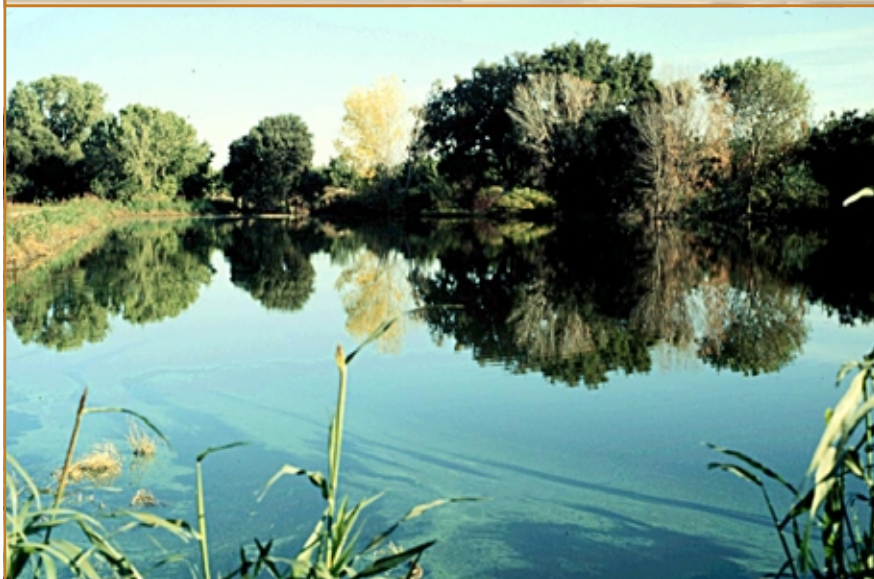
**Lemons:** 42 million cartons (up 30 percent from the 1998-99 production of 32.4 million cartons).

**Tangerines:** 4.60 million cartons (up 53 percent from last season's freeze damaged crop of 3 million cartons).

**Grapefruit:** 16 million cartons (up 7 percent from the 1998-99 production).

California's Agricultural Statistics Service operates under a cooperative agreement between CDFA and the United States Department of Agriculture. Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates.

## Benefitting People and Land in the Bay Delta Region



### Lower Tuolumne River Restoration

**D**ozens of partners have joined forces in a comprehensive effort to restore water quality and habitat for endangered Chinook salmon and other fish and wildlife along the Tuolumne River.

From majestic Yosemite National Park, the Tuolumne River flows toward the San Joaquin River, providing recreational opportunities, power, and water for some of the most productive agricultural valley in the Nation. Within this valley also lie marginally productive and frequently flooded parcels, including a floodplain cleared for farming six decades ago.

Following a major flood in 1997, NRCS in cooperation with the East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District, offered permanent floodplain easements to landowners along the river. NRCS is working on other conservation improvements, such as restored riparian plantings along stream corridors, vegetative buffer strips, and on-farm conservation improvements to restore water quality. These partnership efforts on about 4,000 acres help protect and restore a significant part of the ecosystem and provide a model framework for other restoration efforts along the Tuolumne River.

### Bay Delta Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Concord Service Center
- Davis State Office
- Dixon Service Center
- Livermore Partnership Office
- Lockeford Plant Materials Center
- Modesto Service Center
- Napa Service Center
- Petaluma Service Center
- San Francisco Urban Office
- Stockton Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Alameda County RCD
- Contra Costa RCD
- Dixon RCD
- East Stanislaus RCD
- Florin RCD
- Guadalupe-Coyote RCD
- Lower Consumnes RCD
- Marin County RCD
- Napa County RCD
- San Joaquin County RCD
- Sloughhouse RCD
- Southern Sonoma County RCD
- Suisun RCD
- Ulati RCD
- West Stanislaus RCD

#### Lower Tuolumne River Restoration:

Acres Enrolled in the Floodplain Easement Program: 979  
Comprehensive floodplain easement conservation plans: 10

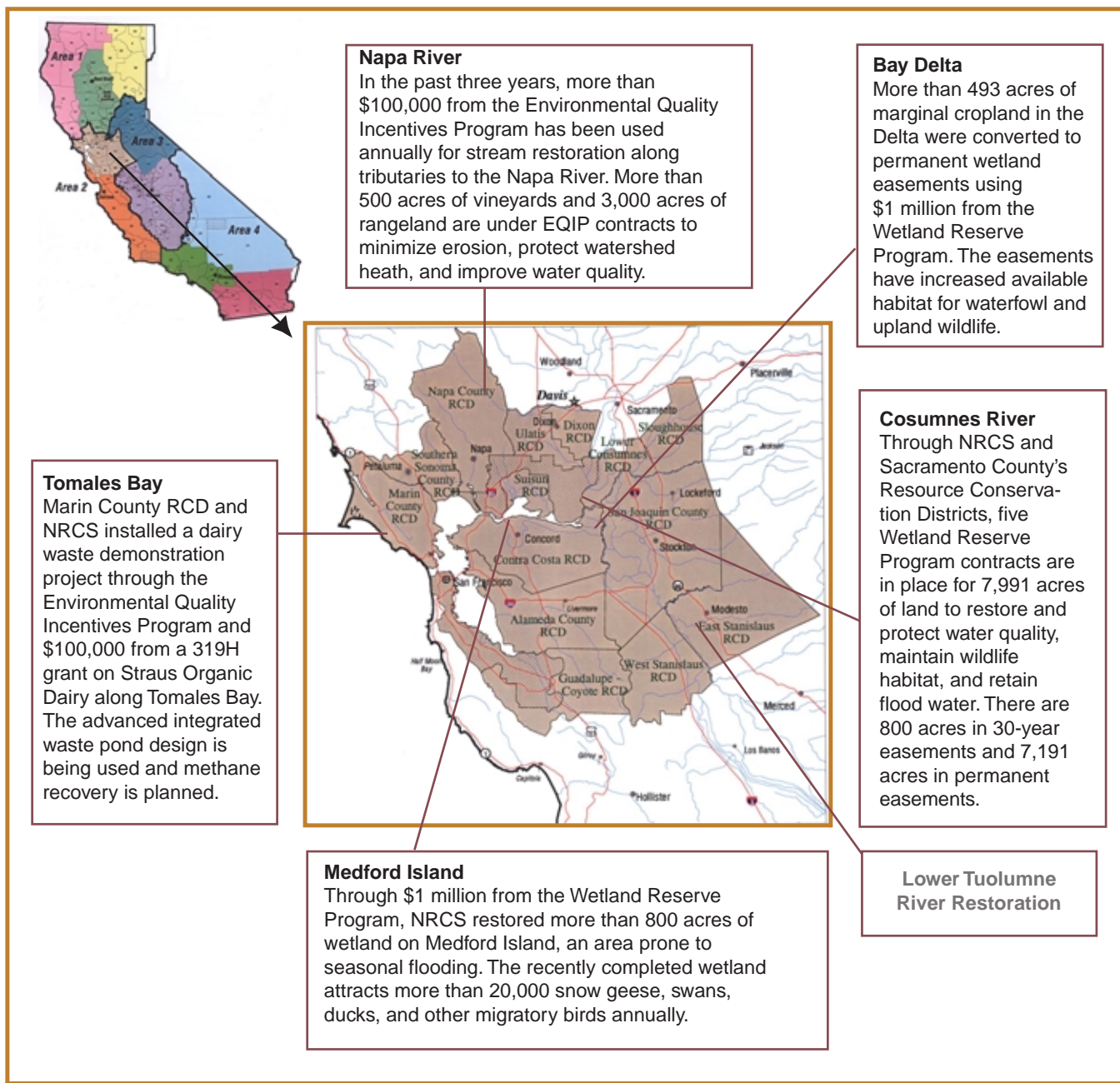
#### Opportunities in the Easement Areas

- Enhancement/restoration of wetland functions
- Critical area planting to aid in erosion control
- Wetland and upland wildlife habitat management to attract wildlife

#### Possibilities in the Easement Areas

- Implementation of firebreaks for vegetation management
- Prescribed burning to aid in control of plant populations
- Prescribed grazing to aid in control of plant populations
- Pest management practices to control noxious weeds





## Caligram

## Elk Grove Opens Doors to Visitors

*By Paul C Laustsen, Public Affairs Specialist, Davis SO*

The Elk Grove Service Center is having an Open House Thursday, April 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Office is one of nine pilot sites for the USDA Service Center Initiative and features many "Business Process Reengineering" (BPR) projects, including the new Customer Service Tool (CST) kit which replaces FOCS planning module, a mobile kiosk, and other demonstrations and exhibits. The building holds the

Farm Services Agency, Rural Development, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Resource Conservation Districts.

If you are interested in attending this Open House, please contact Sacramento Service Center by E-mail [Surjit.toor@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Surjit.toor@ca.usda.gov)

## Benefitting People and Land in the Central Sierra Region



### Yuba and Bear Rivers

To thirsty cities and farms in California, the Yuba and Bear Rivers may look like great big drinking straws directly into the snowy heart of the Sierra Nevada. And most of us would prefer drinking through a clean straw free of sediment, oil and other contaminants. Perhaps this explains why the Yuba Watershed Council, which includes the Nevada County RCD, received a quarter of all the 1998 funds available through the Prop. 204 Clean Water Supply Act—but the money certainly wasn't volunteered.

Ron Zinke, District Conservationist for the NRCS Grass Valley office and chair of the Yuba Watershed Council, admits that at first they didn't think broadly enough and failed to garner the grant. However, in 1998 the Council added a dozen new community voices as well as a more comprehensive conservation approach. They applied for three 204 grants—and were ranked first, second and fourth among 45 applicants—netting \$1.2 million!

Almost 50 groups now comprise the Council. "Every meeting the Council becomes more reflective of our community and we better understand each other's roles. It has done wonders for our communication and mutual appreciation," Zinke says.

The grants fund watershed planning, monitoring, education and outreach, riparian protection, forest thinning, and the clean-up and restoration of Nevada City's Deer Creek.

### Central Sierra Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Auburn Service Center
- Grass Valley Service Center
- Jackson Partnership Office
- Mariposa Partnership Office
- Placerville Service Center
- Sacramento Service Center
- South Lake Tahoe Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Alpine County RCD
- Amador RCD
- El Dorado County RCD
- Georgetown Divide RCD
- Mariposa County RCD
- Mono County RCD
- Nevada-Tahoe Conservation District
- Nevada County RCD
- Placer County RCD
- Tahoe RCD

### Yuba Watershed Council Projects

#### Yuba River

- South Yuba River Management Plan
- Sierra Nevada Mercury Assessment and Education Project
- South Yuba Watershed Habitat Improvement and Fuel Reduction Plan
- Public Outreach and Education Project

#### Deer Creek

- Small Town Model Filtration Project
- Coordinated Resource Management Plan
- Water Quality and Watershed Monitoring
- Little Deer Creek Restoration Project
- Disturbance Inventory Project

#### Bear River

- Coordinated Resource Management Plan
- Disturbance Inventory
- Public Outreach and Education Project
- Volunteer-based Monitoring Program
- Mercury Assessment and Monitoring Demonstration Project





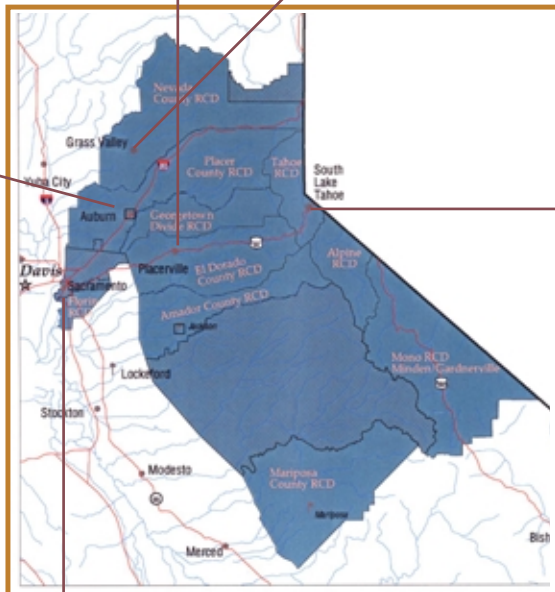
#### Placerville

The rangeland that is rapidly turning into subdivisions in this county is shallow, highly erodible and steep. NRCS, El Dorado County RCD, and Georgetown Divide RCD work with the County to show developers how to prevent erosion. In one subdivision alone, the erosion prevention plan addressed 6,079 houses on 4,000 acres involving the movement of 1.2 million cubic yards of soil. By seeding and mulching vulnerable sites, and using other conservation measures, some 30 tons of soil per acre is kept on site and out of waterways.

#### Yuba and Bear Rivers

#### Auburn

Since 1995, NRCS and the Placer County Resource Conservation District have pioneered a successful fuel-load reduction project for timber land owners. They developed locally applicable technical standards, held dozens of educational workshops, hosted a community-wide demonstration project, and have set in motion the American River Coordinated Resource Management Plan. To date, NRCS and the RCD have leveraged \$57,500 to carry out plans to improve forests and protect people and resources, including the American River, from catastrophic wildfire.



#### South Lake Tahoe

NRCS and two local Resource Conservation Districts are key players in maintaining Lake Tahoe's invaluable environmental, recreational, and economic resources. Using an intensive hands-on Backyard Conservation Program, 1,000 homeowners were educated in 1999 alone, in methods to keep soil in place and nutrients from washing into the Lake. Over 100 homeowners have already applied these practices. Using \$10.3 million of Tahoe Bond Act funds, erosion control and stream improvement are also underway at various sites in Incline Village, Marla Bay, and Kingsbury.

#### Cosumnes River Watershed Study

A major flood in 1997 caused 24 levee breaks along the Cosumnes River, damaging 80 homes and 24,000 acres of agricultural land in Sacramento County. As a result, NRCS formed the Cosumnes River Task Force to develop a Coordinated Resource Management Plan for the watershed. Sloughhouse RCD, Sacramento County stakeholders, and NRCS are exploring options for flood management within the watershed. NRCS is conducting a resource inventory and assessment of the Upper Cosumnes River watershed, laying the foundation for flood management strategies and ecosystem restoration.

## Caligram

## San Bernardino Celebrates Flood Control

*By Paul C Laustsen, Public Affairs Specialist, Davis SO*

The Grove Basin and Riverside Storm Drain Project in Chino came to completion March 24, 2000 with the help of \$5.5 million in EWP assistance. A dedication ceremony celebrated the multi-partner flood control effort, with **Dave Smith** and **Charles Davis** representing

NRCS. About 90 people attended the ceremony. **Ken Miller**, director of the San Bernardino County Transportation/Flood Control Department, praised NRCS for their contribution to this 'historic' agricultural preserve, that will protect dairy farmers and residents throughout the region.

## Benefitting People and Land in the San Joaquin Region



### Owens Creek Restoration

In 1999, the Owens Creek project restored three miles of stream channel on San Felipe Ranch to a more natural meandering course with associated riparian habitat, providing low levees to allow the flooding of a seasonal wetland floodplain adjacent to the creek. The restoration also protects approximately 65 acres of a vernal pool/upland complex for a total project area of 344 acres.

San Felipe Ranch is located approximately 2 miles north of the Merced National Wildlife Refuge and has diverse land uses such as native pasture, irrigated pasture, row and field crops, and wildlife habitat. Owens Creek flows through the ranch into Eastside Canal, supplying irrigation water for many farms and ranches in this highly productive agricultural area.

In the 1930's, high levies were constructed along the creek and the channel was straightened for flood control and irrigation water delivery. The alterations actually exacerbated the flooding problem, however, when rising water periodically breached the earthen levies.

NRCS partnered with East Merced Resource Conservation District, San Felipe Ranch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, and the Wildlife Conservation Board to complete the restoration work, benefitting local residents with improved flood control, seasonal wetlands, water conservation, natural beauty, and abundant wildlife habitat. The project blossomed into reality when partner funds were combined with \$376,200 from NRCS's Wetland Reserve Program, to finance the \$820,000 project.

### San Joaquin Valley Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Bakersfield Service Center
- Fresno Area Office
- Hanford Service Center
- Los Banos Subfield Office
- Madera Service Center
- Merced Service Center
- Visalia Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Buena Vista RCD
- Chowchilla-Red Top RCD
- Coarsegold RCD
- Columbia RCD
- East Merced RCD
- Excelsior/Kings River RCD
- Firebaugh RCD
- Grassland RCD
- Gustine-Romero RCD
- James RCD
- Kern Valley RCD
- Los Banos RCD
- Madera RCD
- Navalencia RCD
- Panoche RCD
- Pond-Shafter-Wasco RCD
- Poso RCD
- Rosedale-Rio Bravo RCD
- San Luis RCD
- Sierra RCD
- Tranquillity RCD
- Tulare County RCD
- Tulare Lake RCD
- Western Kern RCD
- Westside RCD

### Owens Creek Project

- Riparian habitat restored: 3 miles
- Vernal pool/upland complex preserved: 65 acres
- Seasonal wetland/floodplain restored: 250 acres

#### Benefits

- One half mile of the old channel used as a tailwater recovery system
- Protects vernal pool animal and plant species
- Provides habitat for wildlife
- Project protected by a USFWS perpetual conservation easement





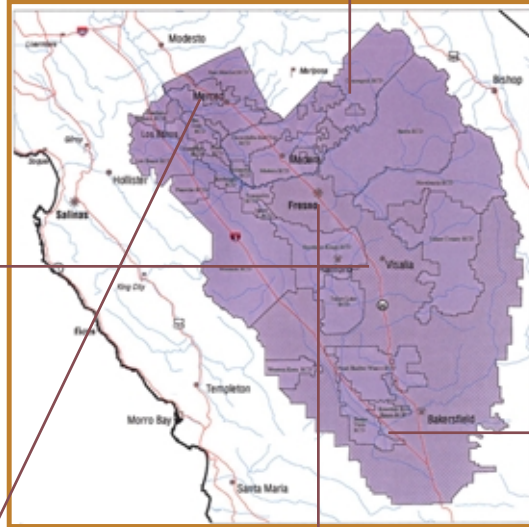
### Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Project

Coarsegold RCD, in a collaborative effort with NRCS and other agencies, is reducing excessive fuel load, creating fuel breaks, and minimizing erosion in the Willow Creek Watershed. Catastrophic wildfire threatens the 6,400-acre project area, including 705 acres near the community of North Fork. NRCS helped the RCD obtain a \$502,000 grant for the project, which will protect lives and property, maintain water quality, reduce sediment loads, improve forest health, and protect wildlife habitat. The partnership has already helped private landowners construct more than 72 miles of fuelbreaks in Eastern Madera County.

### Noxious Weed Task Force

The Tulare County Noxious Weed Task Force was formed to control infestations of noxious weeds and other invasive plants in Tulare County. The group established an approved areawide weed management plan and coordinates activities among Federal, State, and County agencies. Local land trusts, Cattlemen's Association, and the Tulare County RCD are participating. The group has received \$18,000 in grant monies, is developing weed identification brochures, and hosting weed seminars and tours countywide.

### Owens Creek Restoration Project



### Waste Water Management

The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program is providing incentive payments to farmers and dairymen in Kings and Tulare Counties who voluntarily reduce the amount of nitrates coming from their operations. Landowners are working with NRCS and local RCDs to store, transfer, and safely apply manure onto fields. This partnership allows dairies to comply with laws, improve fertilizer management, and improve water quality for everyone.

### Outreach to Underserved Farmers

NRCS works closely with farmers in Fresno County, assisting in the development of conservation plans, irrigation management, soil fertility, and pest control. Special efforts are benefiting minority farmers, such as Southeast Asians, Sikhs, Hispanics, and African Americans. Most farm small 5 to 20 acres parcels and have little capital. Financial assistance, such as NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program Education grants, allows these farmers to develop demonstration projects, bookkeeping classes, pesticide safety training, and marketing programs.

## Caligram

## Customer Service Tool Kit Replaces FOCS

*By Paul C Laustsen, Public Affairs Specialist, Davis SO*

You may have heard of the new Customer Service Tool kit planned for installation on all NRCS common computing environment (CCE) equipment in the near future. The Customer Service Tool kit or CST replaces the old NRCS Field Office Computing System (FOCS). CST will be included on the next CCE equipment upgrade, currently being tested at Ft. Collins. CST uses Microsoft Office software (Word, Outlook, Excel, and Access) to keep track of clients, conservation plans, application, land units, and other data. It is a good idea to complete the CCE training CDs for Microsoft Office before CST is installed. Your old FOCS data will be

converted to the CST program. A CST guide for "getting started" is available for download at

[http://www.its.nrcs.usda.gov/toolkit/toolkit\\_20.htm](http://www.its.nrcs.usda.gov/toolkit/toolkit_20.htm)

Due to budget constraints, no formal CST training is planned. So, it is advised that staff using CST should download and review the tool kit guides available at the web site. Additional information will be available including support for GIS software at a limited number of offices in California. For more information, contact [Mark.Parson@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Mark.Parson@ca.usda.gov).

## Benefitting People and Land in the Central Coast Region



### Elkhorn Slough Watershed

The Elkhorn Slough Watershed Project was initiated by the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County in 1993 to address water quality problems in the Elkhorn and Moro Cojo Sloughs, both of which drain into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary at Moss Landing.

A Watershed Plan for the 44,000 acre area was developed by NRCS and received USDA funding under the Small Watersheds Program (PL-566) beginning on October 1, 1994. Additional funding for this project has included four years of USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program cost-share funding of approximately \$160,000 per year for farmers to install conservation practices. An additional \$8,000 was provided for educational activities. Other money included partnership funding for five years from the Regional Water Quality Control Board for a Watershed Outreach Coordinator and a Packard Grant for additional technical staff.

Project staffing has grown in response to the expanding demand for conservation assistance including an emphasis for outreach to Hispanic speaking limited resource strawberry farmers. Installed projects have prevented an estimated 26,827 tons of eroding soil from entering streams and wetlands. The most widely accepted structural conservation practices in the Elkhorn Slough Watershed continue to be underground outlets and water/sediment control basins. The project team has also had success in promoting the use of critical area planting, grassed waterways, diversions, and row arrangement.

### Central Coast Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Capitola Local Partnership Office
- Central Coast RC&D Office
- Half Moon Bay Partnership Office
- Hollister Service Center
- King City Partnership Office
- Salinas Area Office
- Santa Maria Service Center
- Soquel Partnership Office
- Templeton Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Cachuma RCD
- Coastal San Luis RCD
- Loma Prieta RCD
- Monterey County RCD
- San Benito RCD
- San Mateo RCD
- Santa Cruz RCD
- Upper Salinas Las Tablas RCD

#### Permit Coordination for Resource Conservation on Farms:

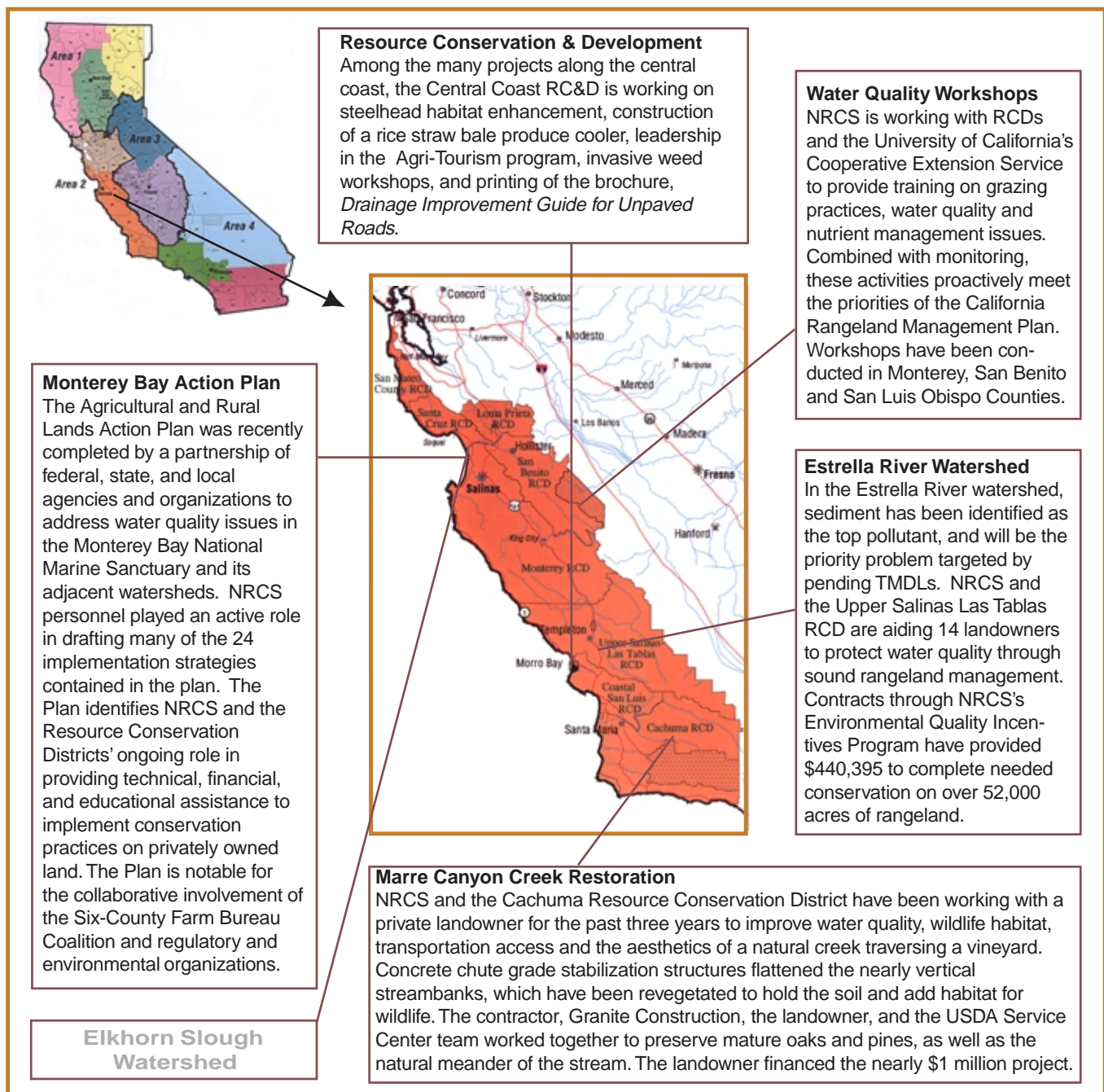
	1998	1999
• Projects completed:	15	9
• Conservation practices applied:	28	14
• Acres of riparian habitat enhanced:	5.5	1.9
• Sediment basins installed:	4	6
• Stream channel enhanced (feet):	4,836	1,850
• Sediment loss prevented (cu yds)	8,930	5,288

Practices implemented during the first two years of the project have prevented an estimated 15,841 cubic yards (21,385 tons) of soil from washing downstream into the sensitive wetlands of Elkhorn Slough. This is equivalent to a line of full-sized pickup trucks carrying soil, parked end-to-end, from Salinas to San Jose (65 miles!)

#### Participating Agencies

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
California Coastal Commission  
California Dept. of Fish and Game  
Regional Water Quality Control Board of Monterey





## Caligram

## Ms. Bettencourt Goes to Washington

By Paul C Laustsen, Public Affairs Specialist, Davis SO

**Allison Bettencourt**, Soil Conservationist in Grass Valley, has been selected as a member of the Leadership Farm Bureau (LFB). The leadership development program sponsored by the California Farm Bureau Federation is a one-year program consisting of seven weekend sessions beginning in March. Allison is one of 10 participants who will be attending monthly meetings and completing assignments.

The program includes travel to Washington, D.C., where participants learn about national issues affecting California. The trip will include an opportunity to meet with key members of Congress and administrative offices to promote Farm Bureau policies. A trip to Mexico is also scheduled to give participants an understanding of the economic relationship with our southern neighbor.

## Benefitting People and Land in the South Coast Region



### Emergency Help Protects Dairies and Water Quality

Grove Basin, completed with emergency assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Inland Empire West RCD, is the first step in solving an urban runoff problem. With the growth of the City of Ontario, increased runoff has caused problems for downstream dairies. This runoff peaked during the 1998 El Niño floods, overwhelmed the waste management systems of the 300 dairies, killed 14,000 cows and calves, and allowed animal waste to flow to the Santa Ana River, the source of groundwater recharge for more than two million people in Orange County.

Problems related to the Santa Ana River have long been known, but lack of funding has prevented implementation of watershed plans. El Niño storms created an urgent need for \$5 million emergency funding through NRCS, matched by \$2.5 million from San Bernardino County. Grove Basin, just south of the City of Ontario, covers 20 acres and holds 299 acre-feet of water. It sits amidst the largest concentration of dairies and dairy waste in the nation, making its flood control benefits essential to the quality of public drinking water.

More than 10,080 feet of drainpipe and 50 storm inlets will intercept urban runoff before it reaches the dairies. The completed basin will be screened from the surrounding urban areas by trees and shrubs. Completion of the project is expected in April 2000.

### South Coast Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Lancaster Service Center
- Los Angeles Urban Office
- Ontario Partnership Office
- Redlands Service Center
- Riverside Area Office
- San Jacinto Partnership Office
- Somis Service Center
- South Coast RC&D

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Antelope Valley RCD
- East Valley RCD
- Inland Empire West RCD
- RCD of the Santa Monica Mts.
- Riverside-Corona RCD
- San Jacinto RCD
- Ventura County RCD

### Grove Basin Emergency Watershed Protection Project

#### Benefits

- 30 acres of open space preserved
- 3,700 feet of buffers
- Millions of gallons of clean water
- Flood protection for 46 dairies and other downstream property

#### Participating Agencies

San Bernardino County Flood Control District  
Inland Empire West RCD  
Chino Basin Water Conservation District  
The Santa Ana River Watershed Group





### Fagan Canyon Emergency Protection

In February 1998, El Niño storms caused severe flooding in Ventura County. The resulting damage threatened public utilities and seven homes in the City of Santa Paula, with predicted damages of over \$1 million. The Ventura County RCD and NRCS worked to protect the streambank and homes. NRCS engineers worked closely with the local sponsor, Ventura County Flood Control District, during exigency work and the design and installation of streambank protection measures, including five concreted rock riprap grade structures. Total cost for both protection measures and streambank restoration was \$554,800.

### Newport Bay

NRCS is assisting the Orange County Cooperative Extension Service to develop a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) pollution control plan for the Newport Bay Watershed. Several thousand acres of rangeland currently drain into Newport Bay. The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Board requires the TMDL plan to meet Clean Water Act goals. NRCS reviewed the watershed plan and recommended that ranchers improve erosion control when constructing access roads, control erosion using structures in stream channels, improve range site utilization, and exclude livestock from streams with fencing.



### Conservation on Wheels

*Conservation on Wheels*, a mobile conservation resource center, is used by the South Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council at schools, fairs, and civic functions. The former recreational vehicle was purchased and modified with a grant of \$39,000 through NRCS's Resource Conservation and Community Division. The mobile classroom is adorned with a natural resources mural and equipped with microscopes, soil probes, soil and water test kits, maps, resource materials, and computers with environmental interactive programs. Requests for the vehicle are pouring in weekly with 8 events scheduled from North Hollywood to Ogden, Utah.

### LA Urban Resource Partnership

The LA Urban Resource Partnership (LA-URP), including NRCS and the RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains, met to discuss the future of the Los Angeles urban ecosystem. More than 60 attendees, including City Council members and citizens, discussed ways to create community gardens and open spaces. The citizens were very concerned with replacing asphalt with greenery in Los Angeles schools and gaining opportunities to share ideas and plans. The agencies were concerned with building community capacity for successful environmental improvement programs. To better inform the community about its programs and projects, the LA URP decided to begin using the Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Department newsletter.

### Grove Basin

## Caligram

## USDA Wellness Center Grand Opening

**By Paul C Laustsen,**  
**Public Affairs Specialist, Davis SO**

The Lyng USDA Service Center, home of the State Office, opened the doors to its new fitness center on April 3. The ribbon cutting ceremony included the heads of four of the agencies located in the building. From April 3 through April 30, employees will have full use of the new fitness equipment in the center for free. Beginning May 1, 2000 a membership fee of \$5 a pay period

(\$130 annually) will be charged for unlimited use of the facility. The Wellness Center features state-of-the-art aerobic equipment such as treadmills, free climbers, a bicycle-recumbent, a bicycle – upright, stepmill, free runner and multi-station gym. Visitors to the State Office can also use the facility for just \$2 a visit.

## Benefitting People and Land in the High Desert Region



### Soil Surveys Assist Military Planners

The great sandy stretches of desert in San Bernardino County can look deceptively empty—but in fact there is plenty of activity afoot, vital to both our national defense and our environment. The Fort Irwin Army Base and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base recognize the unique value the area offers for training soldiers in desert warfare. The soldiers, as well as the plants and animals that call this fragile desert environment home, have learned specialized ways of adapting to the hot, arid climate.

Brought together by the Mojave Desert RCD, the Department of Defense recently joined with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to wisely use and yet protect the desert. Together they conducted two soil surveys across the approximately 1.2 million acres of land occupied by the bases. The information contained in these soil survey reports will be used by military environmental planners to better assess training areas for erosion, harmful dust production, and other environmental concerns. Planners are then able to determine sensitive areas that need protection and to restore areas already damaged.

This collaborative effort provides sound scientific data to arrive at management decisions that will affect the combat readiness of our military troops while protecting our fragile desert resources.

### High Desert Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Apple Valley Service Center
- Bishop Service Center
- Bakersfield Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Eastern Kern County RCD
- Inyo-Mono RCD
- Mojave Desert RCD
- Tehachapi RCD

### Soil Survey Statistics

#### Fort Irwin Army Base

Survey Area:	640,000 acres
Mountain Ranges:	7
Playas and Dry Lakes:	13
Rangeland Ecological Sites:	12

#### Soils

Map Units:	95
New Soil Series Established:	41

Endangered Animals: Desert Tortoise

Endangered Plants: Lane Mountain Milk Vetch

#### 29 Palms USMC Air Ground Combat Center

Survey Area:	592,000 acres
Mountain Ranges:	2
Playas and Dry Lakes:	14
Rangeland Ecological Sites:	26

#### Soils

Map Units:	76
New Soil Series Established:	16

Endangered Animals: Desert Tortoise





### Water Conservation

NRCS, RCDs, and other conservation partners are providing High Desert agricultural producers with technical, educational, and financial assistance to improve their irrigation systems. Financial assistance through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program has enabled many of these producers to install Low Energy Precision Application (LEPA) irrigation systems. These LEPA systems have increased irrigation efficiency by 20 percent, saving from 1 to 3 acre-feet per acre of water per year.

### Flood Control

Eastern Kern County RCD obtained an \$11,000 grant to pursue long-needed flood management planning for the Indian Wells Valley. The RCD formed a Coordinated Resource Management Planning Group to guide the community in identifying problem areas and project options, such as catch basins and retention basins. Basins will relieve peaks flows, provide recharge benefits, and reduce the repetitive damage to the communities of Ridgecrest and Inyokern and to the naval Air Weapons Station at China lake.

### Soil Survey Mapping on Military Bases



### Irrigation Improvement

NRCS is assisting the local Bishop Indian Reservation to renovate two miles of their irrigation system. Conservationists are helping the Bishop Tribe to plan, design, and construct new pipeline to replace the old, broken and leaky pipelines. Similar irrigation renovation work, plus the installation of water control structures, has been done with the Fort Independence Reservation. Over the years, NRCS has assisted six tribes in this area.

### Emergency Watershed Protection

In 1999 San Bernardino County suffered its largest wildfire. Natural vegetation on approximately 64,000 acres was destroyed along with 19 structures. The denuded hillsides posed a threat to homeowner's lives and property in the area. NRCS assisted the Mojave Desert RCD and the San Bernardino County Transportation and Flood Control District in assessing the damage and potential threats to life and property. As a result of this assessment, NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection funds were obtained to install low level, temporary conservation measures to protect downstream areas from runoff and sedimentation.

## USDA Wellness Center Grand Opening



With a cut of a ribbon the USDA Wellness Center officially opened on April 3. At right, from left to right, are **Larry Piatz** (RMA-CFO), **Joshline McLean** (GIPSA), **Val Dolcini** (FSA), **Norm Priest** (NRCS WRO), **Jeffrey Vonk** (NRCS SO), **Moana Roberts** (OIG), and **Steve Almanza** (RD). Shown left, **Anthony Chung**, of Rural Development, just couldn't wait to try out the new equipment.



## Benefitting People and Land in the Southern Baja Region



### Conservation Planning to Protect Water Quality

Three thousand miles lie between the Cities of New York and San Diego, but they share one important commonality: Before drinking water flows into the homes and businesses of millions of people, it traverses many miles of agricultural land. Keeping this land—and water—in ecological balance is proving to be the best way to protect both citizens and the environment.

Both cities are discovering this balance can be efficiently achieved through the conservation planning process of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in conjunction with Resource Conservation Districts. NRCS and the RCD of Greater San Diego County are working with farmers leasing land from the City of San Diego in San Pasqual Valley. Operations include avocado farms, buffalo ranch, ostrich and emu ranch, turf farm, Christmas tree farm, citrus groves, nursery palms, winery, and an 1800-acre open game preserve, containing over 2,700 wild animals. At the valley's western end, water flows into Lake Hodges, a major source of drinking water for San Diego.

Working with NRCS and the RCD, farmers develop plans to voluntarily find ways to manage fertilizers, manure, erosion and pesticides so that they don't find their way into the surface or ground water. To date, eight plans covering 2,548 acres, have been developed.

A biocoastal consensus is emerging that conservation planning—balancing environmental needs and economic viability—is a reliable and cost-effective way to protect water quality.

### Southern Baja Region

#### NRCS Offices

- Blythe Service Center
- El Centro Service Center
- Escondido Service Center
- Escondido Area Staff Office
- Fallbrook Partnership Office
- Indio Service Center

#### Resource Conservation Districts

- Bard RCD
- Coachella Valley RCD
- Elsinore-Murrietta-Anza RCD
- Imperial Irrigation District
- Mission RCD
- Palo Verde RCD
- RCD of Greater San Diego Co.
- Upper San Luis Rey RCD

### San Pasqual Valley Agricultural Preserve

Acres:	11,000
Acreage in Ag Leases:	4,500
Acreage with Conservation Plan:	2,548
City Owned Land:	95 percent
Leaseholders:	35
Watershed Area:	350 Sq. Miles
Endangered Species:	8
Completed Conservation Plans:	8
Conservation Plans Developed Annually:	2-3





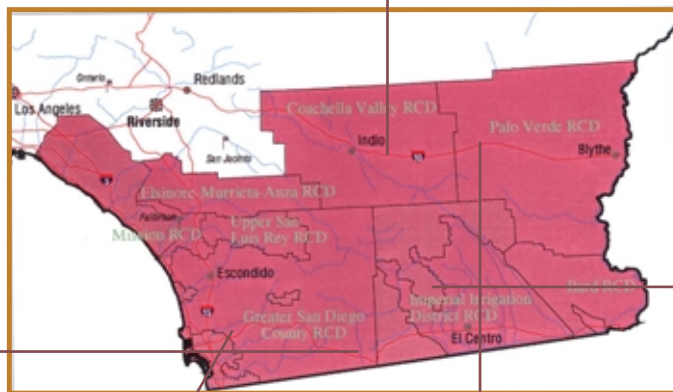
### Conservation Planning

At the request of a Coachella Valley date grower, NRCS and Coachella Valley RCD conducted an extensive evaluation of the grower's 175-acre orchard and helped to develop a conservation plan to improve the orchard's soil quality. With funding from NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the landowner implemented several conservation practices, including chiseling and sub-soiling, cover cropping, residue management, irrigation water management, soil salinity management, and nutrient management. Because the conservation plan was so beneficial, the grower converted his orchard to an organic orchard and the practices implemented through EQIP have become a permanent part of the way the orchard does business.

### Water Quality Protection

The 15,480-acre Campo Indian Reservation lies within the remote south-eastern part of San Diego County. Several of the 145 members residing on the reservation raise livestock, and Campo Creek is the source of drinking water. Livestock grazing the stream banks had caused damage to wetland vegetation and fouled water quality. Through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and assistance from the local RCD, fences were installed to keep livestock out of the creek and nose pumps were installed to provide a source of drinking water for cattle.

Grove Basin



### Assistance to Limited Resource Farmers

NRCS and Palo Verde RCD assisted limited resource farmers in Desert Center who bought 93 acres to grow peas and needed some guidance on desert farming. NRCS prepared a conservation plan, assisted with fencing the property, and taught the landowners to manage their gravelly sand's salinity and monitor its moisture. NRCS also contacted a local farmer who provided equipment needed to prepare the soil, plant the crops, and repair the deteriorated micro-sprinklers. The farm has been a success since implementation of the plan two years ago. The landowners have now extended their farming operation to 93 acres and plan to grow cantaloupes and watermelons as well.

### Conservation Practices

NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Imperial Irrigation District helped an Imperial Valley citrus grower install sediment basins and trickle irrigation systems for his trees on 260 acres. The trees have tripled in size since implementation of these conservation practices. Although citrus is not easy to grow in the Imperial Valley, the EQIP conservation plan and practices have enabled the grower's trees to thrive. Pleased with the results, the grower applied for two more EQIP contracts on an additional 185 acres. He now has a total of 445 acres in EQIP contracts.

## Caligram

## New Publications

By Paul C Laustsen, Public Affairs Specialist, Davis SO

The following publications are recent additions to our conservation library. All are available through the State Office except Natural Resources Partnership, which is available from the Lancaster Service Center.

The Conservation Reserve Program

Booklet and Brochure

Guide to Agricultural PM10 Dust Control Practices

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Leaflet

American Kestrel

Wood Duck

Conquest of the Land Through 7,000 Years, Reissue

Soil Biology Primer (Being Reordered)

Careers USDA

Nation Water and Climate Center

National Summit on Private Land Conservation

Natural Resources Partnership for Youth Achievement  
(Lancaster)

## Benefitting People and Land in the State of **CALIFORNIA**



### **Agritourism**

**I**t may be a trend that started overseas, but when it comes to agritourism California is playing a mean game of catch up. Concrete-locked urbanites are finding a rural retreat at the George Work Ranch in San Miguel. At this retreat folks can ride horses across the scenic 12,000 acres of oak and pine grasslands and chat with three generations of family ranchers; spin off for visits to nearby farmers markets, museums, or country fairs—and settle down to a hearty dinner and good night's rest at the ranch. Ranchers and farmers not only make a little income, but they make friends. And old rural vs. urban prejudices can dissolve in the warmth of a San Miguel sunset and savory dinner.

Agritourism is catching on across California, now that George Work has persevered to remove cumbersome legal restrictions. It is the type of project organized and promoted by California's seven Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) councils—projects that provide economic stimulation by using—not abusing—the natural charms and resources inherent in a region. Be it developing cottage industries with local hardwoods, farmer's markets, flower fields, farm trails, or finding ways for ranchers and tourists to find a mutually satisfying experience, RC&Ds put together the local passion and expertise to make it happen.

### **RC&D Offices**

**North Cal Neva RC&D**

(530) 233-8808

**High Sierra RC&D**

(530) 823-5687

**Central Sierra RC&D**

(209) 257-1851

**South Coast RC&D**

(909) 682-3956

**Central Coast RC&D**

(805) 772-5623

**Trinity RC&D**

(530) 623-2009

**Ore-Cal RC&D**

(530) 397-7463

**Mojave Desert RC&D**

(760) 242-2906

**Central Sacramento Valley RC&D**

(530) 934-6530

### **RC&D Facts**

- The RC&D program was initiated by USDA in 1962 to help people care for and protect their natural resources and improve their area's economy, environment, and living standards.
- RC&D does not compete with other groups and agencies and does not duplicate their functions.
- RC&D works by finding niches and needs and by building partnerships with other groups and communities.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides financial and staffing support to RC&D councils, but most RC&D funding comes from grants received from local, state, and other federal agencies.
- There are 315 funded RC&D areas in the United States and 47 applications for RC&D areas awaiting funding.
- California has seven authorized RC&D areas, two RC&D applications awaiting funding, and plans for six new RC&D areas.



#### Ore-Cal RC&D Council Activities

- Scenic Byways/Rural Restoration
- Emergency Services Cooperatives
- Watershed Coordination Projects
- Noxious Weed Control
- Computer Technology Information Centers

#### North Cal Neva RC&D Council Activities

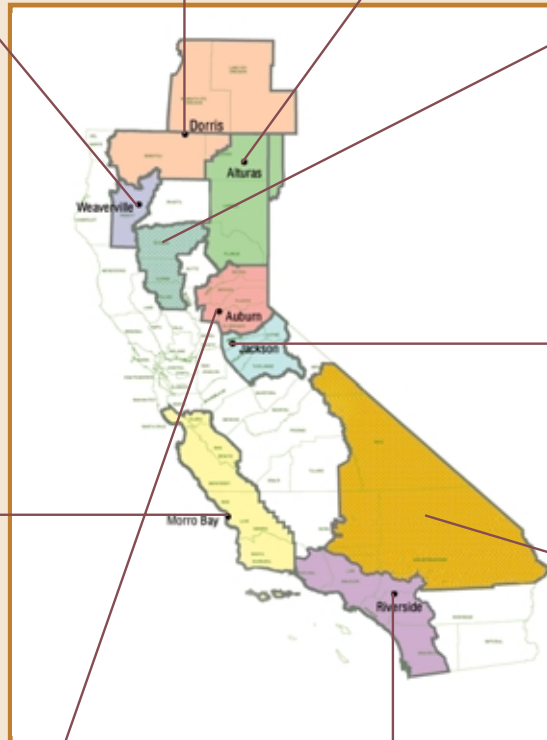
- Pit River Watershed Alliance
- Fire Safe Councils
- American Indian Education Program
- Agricultural Cooperation
- Noxious Weed Control

#### Trinity RC&D Council Activities

- Fire Safe Council
- Forest Health and Management
- Agricultural Promotion
- Watershed and Salmon Restoration (Trinity River)

#### Central Coast RC&D Council Activities

- Agritourism
- Watershed coordination projects (Pajaro and Santa Marie Rivers, Moro Bay)
- Green Waste to Compost Program
- Steelhead fishery habitat enhancement
- Partnering with the Rural Development Center (Training)



#### Central Sacramento Valley RC&D Council Activities

- Agritourism
- Agricultural Waste Management
- Watershed Coordination Projects

#### Central Sierra RC&D Council Activities

- Noxious Weed Control
- Watershed Coordination Projects (Tuolumne River)
- Wildfire Reduction Program

#### Mojave RC&D Council Activities

- Grants Workshops
- Noxious Weed Control
- American Indian Outreach Program

#### High Sierra RC&D Council Activities

- Agritourism
- Watershed Coordination Projects (Yuba, Bear, and American Rivers)
- Noxious Weed Control
- Forest and Agricultural Waste-to-Fuels Program
- Community Development Action Plans

#### South Coast RC&D Council Activities

- U.S./Mexico Border Coalition
- Conservation Education
- Urban Erosion Control Workshops
- Community Park Development
- Air Quality Workshops

## CONTACTS

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Natural Resources Conservation Service  
California State Office  
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Davis, CA 95616  
(530) 792-5600



### JOAN T. SMITH

President  
California Resource Conservation and Development  
Ore-Cal RC&D Office  
PO Box 785  
Dorris, CA 96023  
Office: (530) 397-7463 Home: (530) 459-5626

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# *First Line Supervisors Training Session*

## **Granlibakken Conference Center Tahoe City, California**

*By Rachel Lopez, Administrative Program Assistant, Davis SO*

**F**rom February 29 through March 2, 2000, approximately 85 NRCS employees met for the California first line supervisor's training session at the Granlibakken Conference Center in Tahoe City, California.

In attendance were the State Office and Area Office California Leadership Team, District Conservationists, speakers/presenters, and invited guests.



*The training session provided a marvelous opportunity for attendees to share ideas and express concerns.*

The agenda included cluster presentations explaining what's working for each cluster and how they are operating. This was followed by a question and answer discussion with a representative from each of the 10 clusters serving on the panel. Training on environmental compliance and permitting, grants and agreements, performance goals, tribal relations update, and the Conservation buffer Initiative were also discussed.

Evening events were also planned. At the Tuesday night "Express Yourself" event, employees were asked to wear a T-shirt or sweatshirt that best



*Lodgings at Granlibakken*

expressed who they are. Wednesday night featured an awards banquet, and among the awardees were the winners of the Individual and Group Civil Rights Award recipients. **David Howell** received the award for the Individual category and **Jim Komar** accepted the Team category award on behalf of Team Eureka.

Slides from the meeting and evening events are available on the web for your viewing pleasure at [www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/rts/GRAN/gran.html](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/rts/GRAN/gran.html).



*Discussions were lively and thought provoking.*



# PERSONNEL CHANGES

03/24/00

NAME	POSITION	ACTION	GRADE	LOCATION	DATE
Ortiz, Loaiza	Ag Engineer	Resignation	GS-07	Concord	12/31/99
Honeyfield, K	Computer Asst	Resignation	GS-04	Davis	01/14/00
Laustsen, P	Pub Aff Spec	Promotion	GS-07	Davis	01/16/00
Steele, K.	Soil Consvst	Retirement	GS-09	Stockton	02/29/00
Palmer, E.	St Tr Biology	Promotion	GS-05	Davis	01/16/00
Lindsay, C.	St Tr Soil Cons	Promotion	GS-05	Arcata	01/16/00
Torres, P.	St Tr Agronomy	Resignation	GS-05	Riverside	01/20/00
Wasner, A.	Soil Sci	Reassignment	GS-11	Lancaster	02/13/00
Collins, J.	Soil Consv	Resignation	GS-09	Modesto	03/24/00
Velarde, R.	St Tr Soil Sci	Promotion	GS-07	Arcata	02/27/00
Ennor, J.	St Tr Soil Sci	Promotion	GS-07	Arcata	02/27/00
Nelson, M.	St Tr Soil Cons	Reassignment	GS-05	Eureka	02/27/00
Yang, T.	Office Auto Clk	Term-Exp of Apt	GS-04	Fresno AO	02/14/00

## Earth Day: A Sample of Activities for NRCS-California

Earth Day 2000 Festival

Saturday, April, 22

Imperial Valley Expo Imperial, Ca.

This festival will be a community activity with demonstrations of strawbale construction, presentations on solar energy, recycling, hands on activities, displays, and much more.

Other partners involved: Imperial Valley ROP, BLM, Imperial County Agricultural Commissioners office, Extension Service, local merchants, Corrections Department, Fish & Game, and others.

Cydean Gillespie (760) 352-7886

cydean.gillespie@ca.usda.gov

Library Display

April 24 - May 1, 2000

Marysville, Yuba County

Display encouraging conservation on farmland and home sites.

Yuba County RCD

Library Display

April 24 - May 1, 2000

Yuba City, Sutter County

Display encouraging conservation on farmland and home sites.

Sutter County RCD

Conservation Tour

Second week May 2000

Yuba County

Provide tour to view wetland restoration projects, improved irrigation systems and water management practices, impacts of wildfire, fuel reduction through brush removal and timber management and oak tree establishment project.

Yuba County RCD

Ernst Paschke (530) 674-1461 ext.3,

ernst.paschke@ca.usda.gov

Earth Day 2000 Celebration

Saturday, April 22, 2000 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Western Gateway Park in Penn Valley (Nevada County)

Allison Bettencourt (530) 272-3417

allison.bettencourt@ca.usda.gov

Creek Clean-up 2000

April 15, 2000

Elk Grove Creek

Elk Grove CSD Department of Park & Recreation

Sacramento County RCD's

Surjit Toor (916) 714-1104

surjit.toor@ca.usda.gov

# CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS *in California*

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U.S. Department of Agriculture  
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Davis, California 95616

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